

## Stumbling block

*Bill policy forces ASUN to start over year after year*

As much as we would like to believe we are living in a microcosm of society, at least one aspect of our life at UNL is not parallel to reality.

And that's the way our government is run.

Sure, we have a president, a couple vice presidents, some senators, a committee or two and some advisory boards. And they meet every week. That's fine.

They do all of this to pass bills every year in an effort to make changes for the students they represent.

Only one problem: The impact of these bills is limited. In order for the proposals to have a lasting effect, the succeeding senate must redraft, re-introduce and repass the ideas.

It's likely the bills may never see the light of day again — the same bills different senators representing nearly the same set of students passed the year before.

All bills will then die at the end of that senate's term. And the cycle will continue.

The only proposals that last are bylaw additions and amendments, and that makes sense, but so does keeping the bills and resolutions year after year.

The U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate must repeal laws passed by preceding bodies. They aren't required to repass bills introduced by senators whose terms ended. That would be silly.

Granted, Congress passes many, many more bills each year than ASUN probably has in the last 10 years, but the concept is still the same. Those senators' work lasts.

In addition to allowing the bills to have a lasting impact, changing the policy that bills die may increase knowledge and discussion on the issues the bills tackle.

Instead of passing a bill that says the same thing as the last one did senators could build upon the last year. Senators could add to their efforts to support or oppose those issues.

The present system allows senators to reaffirm their commitment to issues every year — not allowing them to seem apathetic. But a revived policy allowing the bills to stand year after year would still leave room for the senate to do that.

The senators always can pass a resolution stressing their support for an issue. They could hold a forum or a panel on an issue during a peak time in the union, showing they want to hear students' views on a topic. Or the senate could always repeal the past bills.

Senators don't need bills to speak out on issues. There are other avenues. They need to build upon the work that already has been done.

Otherwise, the student government as we know it will remain at step one.

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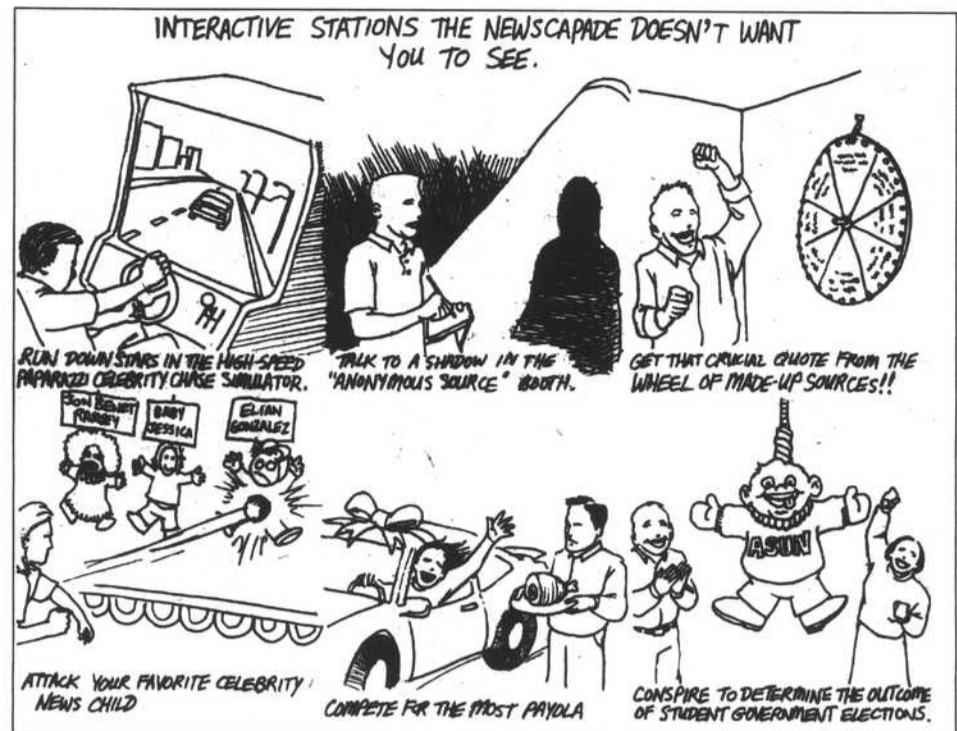
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### Editorial Policy

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### Obermeyer's VIEW



## My day as deity

*What I did to the universe on my day in charge*



I was starting to get very tired on Tuesday night, the numbers on my watch just a click or two away from midnight. Generally by this point of the evening, I'm trying to get to bed, kicking myself for taking classes that force me to be up by 7:30 a.m. five days a week.

I started to stagger towards my room, my Siamese cat following me. Then the cat started to skitter away. Normally, I wouldn't have given this a moment's notice, as Marx is somewhat insane, but then I realized why he was running.

We make it a point not to leave glowing balls of radiant white light floating in the middle of our hallway, but lo and behold, there one was.

My watch beeped midnight at that exact moment.

"Greetings, Cliff Hicks, you have been selected to be omnipotent today," the ball of light said to me, in that tone of voice only a ball of light can have.

I was dumbstruck for a moment, before years of journalism training kicked in.

"Excuse me, could you repeat that?" I asked.

"You're omnipotent today, so for the next 24 hours, you have total and complete control over the universe and existence."

There was a long bout of silence.

"Cool deal. What's the catch?"

"Catch?" responded the ball of light in a booming voice. "There is no catch. In 24 hours, however, you will be exactly as you were a few moments ago."

I nodded, mulling this over a moment.

"Anything else I need to know?"

"That is all," the voice said, sounding smug. Then the ball of light faded and was gone.

My cat scurried over to me and started rubbing against my legs defensively.

"Scared you, huh?" I asked him.

"You better believe it, bub," the cat responded. "Made me wish I had my claws back, so I coulda whacked that thing." Leave it to me to subconsciously grant my cat the ability to speak.

I yawned, then paused. I snapped my fingers and suddenly I wasn't tired anymore. "This could be fun," I thought to myself. "Hey Groucho, you want to go see the world?"

Marx looked up at me with those unreadable blue eyes of his. "Uh, if you say so, boss."

I scooped the cat up into my arms and snapped my fingers once more. Suddenly we were up in space, looking down on the planet.

"Gaze down upon our home, my feline friend. The earth, perfect and serene, beautiful and wondrous. What do you think?"

Marx grinned at me. "Yeah ... it's just not enough, is it?" I laughed. My cat certainly had his own outlook on life.

Marx and I then took a tour across the planet, looking at various things I'd always wanted to see until I stopped in a coffee shop in Rome. The waiter didn't notice my cat and, by luck — nudge, nudge, wink, wink — the waiter spoke perfect English.

"Are you going to look into the future and see when the world ends?" Marx asked me.

"Nah, no need. It doesn't."

My cat peered at me. "It doesn't?"

"I doubt it. We've claimed for centuries that man is driving the world into the ground, but every time things seem to be getting bad, they start getting better. The reason WWII never happened was because both sides knew we'd never survive it, and therefore, everyone bluffed and no one called it."

"The world isn't going to end, at least not with a bang. But if I looked a few thousand years into the future, I doubt it'd make any sense to me anyway, so what's the point?"

"What about your future? You going to change it?" Marx asked me.

I took a sip from my cappuccino. "And spoil the fun of it? I like a few surprises in my life."

My cat mullied this over as he lapped at his saucer of milk.

"Still, you could just make yourself a billionaire. Or find the perfect girlfriend. Or give me back my claws and my ..."

"No, no and no. The first two involve me changing things, which I don't want to do no matter how tempting the idea is. The last two, well, I had you declawed and neutered so I could keep you. Sorry pal."

"So what are you going to do with all this power that you've got at your fingertips? Anything?"

I shook my head. "The most important thing about power is to know when you aren't ready for it, and I'm not, nor do I think anyone else is or ever could be."

"Any cat would know what to do with it."

"Some cat already had it."

The cat, I kid you not, ruffled his brow at me. "How's that?"

"Cats sit around all day in people's houses, get free food and shelter and have made a living out of being both lazy and annoying, and yet humans love them regardless."

Marx chuckled, which is an odd sight, a cat chuckling, but nothing odder than anything else that had happened this day. "Good point."

Another snap of my fingers and my cat and I were home. The day passed and at midnight, I felt the omnipotent powers drain from my system, and everything was normal once more.

I laid down in my bed and my cat darted across the room and coiled up on the blanket next to me.

As my eyes closed, I swear I heard him sing. "Hello, I must be going. I came to say I cannot stay I must be going. I'm glad I came, but just the same I must be going."

Was I dreaming? Still awake or completely asleep? I whispered quietly, "Say goodnight, Marx."

The last thing I remember was my cat whispering back, "Goodnight Marx."

Who says you can't train a cat?

Cliff Hicks is a senior news-editorial and English major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.